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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000014

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKISH FIRST ARMY COMMANDER APOLOGIZES PRIVATELY
FOR PUBLIC REMARKS ON MOSUL ATTACK

REF: A. 04 ANKARA 7075

[1](#)B. 04 ANKARA 7099

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Gerri H. O'Brien
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Turkish First Army Commander GEN Tolon was apologetic about his Dec. 19 statement implying the US was complicit with the attack on Turkish police in Mosul when ODC Chief Maj Gen Sutton discussed it with him during a Dec. 29 courtesy call. Tolon said he had assumed that the movement of the police from Turkey to the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad had been coordinated in advance with the US. He undertook to look into the apparent breakdown of internal GOT coordination. While we doubt Tolon's inquiries will have much impact on the Turkish government's chronic interagency coordination problems, we believe this outspoken general got the message that speaking on the basis of assumption and rumor is not appropriate. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On Dec. 29 ODC Chief Maj Gen Sutton paid a courtesy call on Turkish First Army Commander GEN Hursit Tolon. Tolon had made a statement following the Dec. 17 attack on a Turkish police convoy in Mosul in which the general suggested the US was somehow culpable by not preventing the attack (ref a); the Charge registered our displeasure with the general's statement to Deputy Chief of the Turkish General Staff (TGS) GEN Ilker Basbug Dec. 21 (ref b). Maj Gen Sutton's scheduled 30-minute meeting with Tolon ran for close to two hours as the discussion turned to the attack and Tolon's statement.

[1](#)3. (C) Tolon professed to be a good friend of the US, detailing for General Sutton his and his wife's positive experiences in the US. On Iraq, Tolon said that he shared the USG's goals of a free and unified Iraq and urged the US to stay the course. When General Sutton expressed condolences for the loss of five policemen in the Dec 17 attack, Tolon began an explanation of his statement the following day attacking the US and Iraqi Kurds for not preventing the attack, remarking that he regretted that since the Turkish special police convoy was traveling with the knowledge of US Forces in Iraq and leaders like Kurdistan Democratic Party head Barzani, it was difficult to see them subjected to an ambush with a loss of life.

[1](#)4. (C) General Sutton corrected Tolon, saying that to the best of his knowledge, no US military or governmental officials were made aware of the Turkish special security police movement into Iraq (and through Mosul) until AFTER the ambush took place. Neither TGS nor the Turkish liaison officers in Tampa, Baghdad and Mosul had informed the US of the movement, and he was unaware of any communication from Turkish officials to our embassies in either Ankara or Baghdad.

[1](#)5. (C) During this explanation, GEN Tolon became silent and his complexion became ashen - he was speechless. After several moments, the two reviewed the sequence of events again, with General Sutton emphasizing that the first contact he had with TGS was after the attack when TGS/J3 contacted him to request the US military investigate the attack. The ODC Chief added that Task Force Olympia (TFO) Commander BG Ham had specifically told him that if he had known in advance of this convoy's movement, he could and would have suggested an alternate routing and possibly could have provided some military escort support.

[1](#)6. (C) Tolon said that he had assumed that this entire police convoy movement had been carefully coordinated with both US Forces in Iraq and key Kurdish leadership - hence his anguish when the convoy had been ambushed and lives lost. He spent several minutes apologizing for his statements to the press...and said he was deeply troubled. He then made a phone call to an individual he said was a friend in a significant position with the Turkish Special Police to ask who the police had coordinated the movement with inside the Turkish government and TGS. He reported that this individual told him that the Turkish police "exchange" in Baghdad had been arranged with only two day's notice...and that the individual was not sure who in TGS was supposed to be notified but that he thought that some type of coordination was to have taken place. Tolon's police contact promised to

look into it and report back to the First Army commander.

17. (C) Tolon thanked the ODC Chief for coming to him personally to discuss the security police convoy situation and apologized again for his statements which he said were based on a false assumption. He emphasized that he was incredulous at the likely total breakdown in coordination within his government,s various departments and that he would over the next weeks, carefully look into this matter.

18. (C) Comment: When the Charge raised Tolon's statement with DCHOD GEN Basbug and PolMilCouns subsequently raised it with TGS/J5 Strategy Chief MG Cengiz Arslan, both explained that Tolon was speaking from emotions and with a lack of information. This appears to have been the case. In fact, Tolon has a reputation of being an outspoken hardliner. Nonetheless, we believe that both Tolon and his colleagues in TGS got the message that we do not view such irresponsible and ill-informed statements as appropriate behavior by people in positions of authority. End comment.

19. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
EDELMAN